



A

FAITHFUL REPORT

OF

THE LATE DISGRACEFUL

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

BRIDGNORTH INFIRMARY.

"In actorem mali sæpe recidit malum."

"Mischief often returns upon the authors of it."

BY

J. M. COLEY,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS AND OF THE MEDICAL
AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, IN LONDON, &c., AND FOUNDER
OF, AND TRUSTEE AND SURGEON FOR LIFE TO
THE BRIDGNORTH INFIRMARY.

WOLVERHAMPTON:

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1839.



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A
FAITHFUL REPORT,

&c.

THE remoteness of Bridgnorth from any Hospital, and the expense and inconvenience incurred by the poor requiring assistance in operative surgery, &c., induced me to publish a pamphlet* proposing the establishment of a small Infirmary, which was so favourably received, that funds were provided at my solicitation for its erection and support. Before this institution was established, I had been many years in the habit of relieving gratuitously more than 1,000 poor persons annually, at my house and at lodgings in the town. Much labour, expense, and time were required, and had I not been bountifully assisted by the nobility and gentry, and persevered in carrying into effect, as well as projecting it, the institution could not have been brought into operation.

Having matured my design, I commenced a correspondence with many eminent medical men, who kindly supplied me with the economy of various establishments on a larger scale. Among these I may particularly mention the late venerable Dr. Storer, of Nottingham, whose authority I adduce in approbation of my proposal:—

“ Although personally unacquainted, I am no stranger to your name in your published papers, as the offspring of a mind well

* “ Outline of a Plan for supplying the Poor in the Town and Neighbourhood of Bridgnorth with Medical and Surgical Assistance.—By J. M. Coley. 1832.”

qualified for observation, and calculated to advance the progress of medical science. I have read, re-read, and fully considered your prospectus. It is impossible I should feel any hesitation in declaring my approbation of it. It bears the marks of being the result of mature deliberation, and will, I trust, be adopted, *without trenching* on its principles.

"The account I have read in the last St. James' Chronicle of the auspicious opening of your new Infirmary, calls upon me to congratulate you on the *completion of so great a work, requiring, as I well know, years of ardour and perseverance.* The concurrence of persons of the first rank and respectability in the county, as patrons of an institution of such undeniable excellence and utility, reflects credit on themselves, and cannot fail to be flattering to you."

To this testimony of approbation may be added the following, expressed by the Hon. R. H. Clive, when he laid the first stone of the Infirmary:—

"It will at all times give me great pleasure to see this institution in perfect operation, *flourishing under the direction of its founder*, and disseminating health and vigour to every object of charity in the neighbourhood. Under such auspices I am convinced the work cannot *but* succeed, and I hope and trust that, with the assistance of Divine Providence, it will soon be brought to perfection, and prove a blessing to all those who are concerned in it. Permit me to observe to you that *it is my firm conviction that my honorable friend, Mr. Coley, is actuated by the best and purest motives that ever entered the breast of man, in beginning and conducting this good work.* To his professional knowledge and skill, which are so well known, I need not make any allusion."—Salopian Journal, Oct. 7, 1835.

Notwithstanding these and similar remarks, emanating from men of rank and science, *a small party in the town* endeavoured to throw obstacles in my way, and, having engaged to assist me, withdrew their services when most required. Hence I was obliged to form *a new committee*; and, after I had overcome the intrigue, dishonour, and conflicting interests opposed to me, and had the satisfaction of seeing my undertaking prosper, and while I was exercising my unabated energies to support the character and utility of the institution, for the benefit of the poor, and in gratitude to those who had supported me, one of the party concerned in the intemperate proceedings I am about to unfold, was so ungenerous as to dispute my right to be considered its founder.

The following extract from the journal referred to will refresh his recollection, and that of those with whom he connected himself.

"The inscription on the upper surface of the silver trowel, was the following :—

" THE FIRST STONE
OF THE
BRIDGNORTH INFIRMARY,

LAID BY THE HON. R. H. CLIVE, M.P.,

OCTOBER 2, 1835.

' AND ALL THAT SEE IT SHALL SAY THIS HATH GOD DONE, FOR
THEY SHALL PERCEIVE THAT IT IS HIS WORK.'—

PSALM 44, VERSE 9."

" On the reverse :—

" PRESENTED BY J. M. COLEY, M.R., C.S.L.,
&c., &c.,

THE FOUNDER OF THE INSTITUTION."

At the first meeting of the subscribers, held in the Town Hall, on November 29, 1832, T. Whitmore, Esq., in the chair, it was resolved,

" That every donor of £25 or upwards, be considered a trustee."

And, at a meeting of the trustees, on November 4, 1835, when the rules were adopted, T. Whitmore, Esq., in the chair, it was resolved, according to rule 6,

" That the *heirs of the original trustees be inheritors of the trust for ever* ; and that every donor of £25 or upwards be also a trustee for life."

The original trustees were the Earls of Stamford and Darlington, the Hon. R. H. Clive, the late Sir T. J. T. Jones, T. Whitmore, Esq., T. C. Whitmore, Esq., R. Pigot, Esq., the Hon. T. C. Tracy, the late John Pritchard, Esq., the Rev. Dr. Rowley, and J. M. Coley, Esq., who all purchased their right by donations of £25 or upwards.

A Deed, dated April 20 and 21, 1835, *expressing no trust*, was executed for the conveyance of the land on which the Infirmary is built, from T. Whitmore, Esq., to the rest of the above original trustees, and to the following members of the committee—J. F. Williams, Esq., the Rev. W. K. Marshall, T. P. Purton, Esq.,

William Lind Lambart Esq.^{A 2}

T. Duppa, Esq., and Mr. J. Lewis, whose names were introduced in the deed of conveyance *at my sole request, but who were never appointed trustees to the institution*; and according to the existing rules *no trustees can be created by appointment*, until the number is reduced to five; *and there is no rule, resolution, or deed declaring any appointment of trustees, except by donation.*

The rule adopted for the appointment of the medical and surgical officers, was the following:—

Rule 21.—“That one consulting physician and *one Surgeon*, who must be a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London or Dublin, be appointed by the trustees *for life*; and that two other surgeons be elected annually by the subscribers,” &c.

At a meeting of the trustees of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, held on November 4, 1835, Thos. Whitmore, Esq., in the chair, the following resolution was adopted:—

“That Mr. J. M. Coley be appointed *Surgeon for life* to this institution.

Signed,

“Thomas Whitmore, Chairman.”

To afford the trustees the power, if necessary, of dismissing *either of the annual surgeons*, the following rule was made:—

Rule 43.—“That, should either of the surgeons be found guilty of publishing any scandalous remarks respecting the professional character or conduct of his colleague or colleagues at the Infirmary, or be found guilty of any other immoral or dishonorable conduct, it shall be lawful for the trustees, at a Special General Meeting of them, to dismiss such surgeon so offending, if, upon a careful review of the case, and the report of the committee, they should find him guilty of the charges preferred against him.”

When the Infirmary was ready for the reception of patients, I requested *all* the medical gentlemen in the town to send testimonials. As no one offered his services, I was compelled to officiate alone as surgeon, relieving at the institution, during the first year, nearly 1,000 patients, who had followed me there *in opposition to prejudice and party spirit*; and the whole business of the charity was conducted under my direction, as honorary secretary, in compliance with the rules I had formed for its government. From the period of its establishment till the commencement of the present year, the institution flourished and afforded universal satisfac-

tion, *except to the acting committee, a local party, consisting chiefly of clergymen*, who united in opposing me by getting up requisitions, compelling me to call meetings for the introduction of *private quarrels*, which I had uniformly resisted.

In 1837, finding that my duties at the Infirmary, which I had never neglected, interfered with my private practice, I assembled the trustees to alter a rule to render admissible, as one of the ANNUAL surgeons, a very young man of the name of Martin, whom I had recently engaged as a partner: no other surgeon officiating, at that time, except myself. At the end of the year, 1837, Mr. Martin's office expired, and he was not re-elected till 1839, when he was *illegally* appointed by a small party, *without the knowledge of the subscribers*, who were the *regular electors*. He was therefore not a colleague of mine at the Infirmary in 1838, when, having many reasons for being dissatisfied with him, I was advised by an eminent counsel to dissolve our partnership without delay, and in order to free myself from all incumbrance and connection with him, I purchased his share of book-debts, &c., in addition to the immediate payment of a sum of money, in the presence of Mr. S. Nichols, jun., solicitor, and Mr. E. Ridley, who can bear witness to the liberal and honorable manner in which I acted, notwithstanding Mr. Martin has endeavoured to calumniate me on that point. Had I been disposed, I might have taken advantage of his having deceived me by stating that he was authorized to practice pharmacy by a private arrangement between the Society of Apothecaries, in London, and the College of Surgeons, in Edinburgh, which, with other circumstances, rendered the agreement void. As he continued, notwithstanding my lenity, to assert that he was qualified to practice as an apothecary, I wrote to the Society for information, requesting such a reply as I might publish for the benefit of the profession. This correspondence, which will be found in the report of the committee, page 17, was published in December last. No allusion was made to any individual, and if Mr. Martin had not felt self-convicted, and exposed his own disqualification three months afterwards, it never would have been known that the correspondence had any reference to him. Mr.

Martin having no further claim on me, *I avoided all communication with him*; nevertheless he was constantly annoying me, and in January last contrived to gain access to my house, and in a rude manner demanded the payment of a sum of money, before it was due, to his sister. Having no accout nor authority to receive the money, he was referred to his sister, who made out a bill, which Mr. Martin forwarded to me, with a note again demanding instant payment to *himself*. As he had no right to receive it, I took the precaution of transmitting the sum the same day to his sister, by a draft specially endorsed. On the 1st of February, Mr. Martin, knowing the time when he might find me discharging my duties at the Infirmary, proceeded there, and holding in his hand my letter, which had contained the draft to his sister, conducted himself in so offensive a manner as to compel me to circulate to the trustees the following address,* which was immediately noticed by the principal, distant Trustees, with deep concern:—

“TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRIDGNORTH INFIRMARY.

“My Lords and Gentlemen,—

“I am induced with much reluctance to call your attention to the conduct of Mr. Martin, one of the surgeons to this institution, who, since I found it expedient to dissolve all connection with him as a partner, and he can no longer have access to my house, has annoyed me at the Infirmary, and interrupted me in the discharge of my duties there, particularly on Friday, February 1, when he entered the Surgeons'-room, where I was occupied with the house surgeon and my pupil, bolted the door, placed himself against it to prevent my egress, assaulted me with the most abusive and scandalous language, and refusing to open the door, detained me so long that I was obliged to force my way out of the room.

“It will be impossible for me to continue my services, unless some effectual steps are taken to afford me that protection from insult and annoyance, which every medical gentleman has a right to enjoy, while officiating in the institution, independently of redress through the medium of the law.

“After the struggles I have had to overcome prejudices, apathy, and conflicting interests, in founding this useful institution, and after the valuable assistance I received from you in com-

* The committee having allowed Mr. Martin *in my absence* to introduce these *private affairs* in the Board Room, and having grounded their unjustifiable proceedings upon them, I regret that I am under the necessity of exposing them to the public.

pleting the arduous undertaking, I need not observe how necessary it is that those who dispense the benefits of the charity, may be enabled to discharge their duties without the attendance of a police officer.

"Some idea may be formed respecting the injury which this outrage may inflict, by interrupting my attendance and exertions, when I inform you that out of 960 of the poor, relieved at the institution during the last year, more than 700 have been my patients.

"Were I not conscious that I have a higher duty to perform than to gratify private feeling or convenience, I should not hesitate to resign that appointment, which you have done me the honor to confer, in a manner evincing your good opinion and confidence.

"Allow me to add, that it is a matter of vital importance to the character and prosperity of the institution, that you should exercise your deliberate and impartial judgment in the course you may pursue; and, not doubting that you will faithfully discharge the trust reposed in you, I leave the affair in your hands, and have the honor to remain, my lords and gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

"J. M. COLEY,

Surgeon, Hon. Sec. and Trustee.

"Bridgnorth, February 21, 1839."

Two days after the publication of this address, Mr. Martin, determined to anticipate my charge and excite a prejudice in his own favor, sent a note requesting me to call a meeting of the committee, to which the following answer was returned:—

"February 24, 1839.

"Sir,—

"I am requested by Mr. Coley to inform you, that he has already laid before the trustees the assault you committed on him at the Infirmary, on February 1, and, as the matter is in their hands, he cannot interfere by calling any meeting on the subject, until their opinions have been made known to him.

"I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"To Mr. Martin."

"W. H. B. WINCHESTER.

To prevent a meeting of trustees and *assuming the office of secretary*, Mr. Martin contrived to call the committee together on March 2, by forwarding a circular, dated February 27. The next day, I, as honorary secretary, transmitted the following; of course concluding that the committee would attend to a *regular*, in preference to an *irregular*, notice:—

"February 28, 1839.

"Mr. J. M. Coley begs to inform Mr. — that as soon as he has heard from the distant trustees, Mr. Whitmore will be so kind as to appoint a day for a meeting of them, to investigate Mr. Martin's conduct at the Infirmary on February 1 ;* till which meeting all proceedings relative to that affair will be postponed."

Whether there had been a previous understanding or not between Mr. Martin and the committee, I cannot say, certain parties however did meet in the Board-room in compliance with his *irregular* notice, and a most violent enemy of mine was sent for twenty miles to join them ; and having heard Mr. Martin's *ex-parte* statements in my absence, they sent me the following requisition :—

"Bridgnorth Infirmary, November 2, 1839.

"Sir,

"We the undersigned members of the committee of the Bridgnorth Infirmary request you to convene a special committee on Monday next, the 4th of March, at eleven o'clock A.M., for the purpose of investigating the *circumstances* which have led to the misunderstanding between the surgeons of the institution, and to transact other business :—

"THOMAS ROWLEY,
JOHN PURTON,
J. F. WILLIAMS,

WILLIAM MOORE,
W. KNOX MARSHALL,
G. BELLET."

It must be observed that all the above parties were clergymen, except Mr. Williams, and the circumstances alluded to they knew to be of a private nature.

On March 4, the parties assembled at the Infirmary, and, although Mr. Winechester informed them I could not possibly attend, they heard Mr. Martin's statements, consisting of *private matters*, unconnected with the institution, with which they had no concern, and which they should have had the decency, at all events in my absence, to have dismissed ; as they were well aware some of the party were acting only from *private animosity*. Upon these *ex-parte* statements, without even seeing or writing to me on the subject and without affording me an opportunity of bringing forward my complaint, and in contradiction to the positive evidence before them, contained in my correspondence with the

* I have a letter from Mr. Whitmore to this effect.

Society of Apothecaries, confirming Mr. Martin's deception, the committee passed the following resolutions implying that *he had acted honorably by deceiving me*, and that I had incurred the penalty of expulsion by publishing a correspondence three months before, which every one may clearly see had no connexion with the Bridgnorth Infirmary.

At a meeting of the committee held on Monday, March 4, 1839, the Rev. Dr. Rowley, in the chair, it was resolved :—

"1st.—That it is the opinion of the committee, that Mr. Coley having acknowledged that certain letters published by him in the *Ten Town's Messenger* of the 7th December last, had special reference to Mr. Martin, one of the surgeons of the institution,* Mr. Coley has thereby rendered himself liable to the penalty provided by the 43d rule.

"THOMAS ROWLEY, Chairman."

Dr. Rowley having vacated the chair (being called away on business before the termination of the meeting), the Rev. W. K. Marshall was called to the chair. It was resolved further :—

"2nd.—That having heard Mr. Coley's statements, (read by Mr. Winchester on his behalf,) and also Mr. Martin's reply, and having seen the articles of agreement for a copartnership† between Mr. Coley and Mr. Martin, they are of opinion that Mr. Martin has not practised any deception towards Mr. Coley with regard to his medical qualifications, nor acted in any way dishonorably towards him.

"3rd.—That with respect to Mr. Martin's conduct on the 1st of February last, they cannot but express their regret and disapprobation at such proceedings having taken place at the institution: but considering the provocation which Mr. Martin had received, and the ample apology made by him to the committee, they do not consider it needful to pass any heavier *censure* upon him.

"4th.—That this meeting do adjourn till Tuesday, the 12th of March instant, at 12 o'clock.

"W. KNOX MARSHALL, Chairman."

Finding that the committee had, in my absence, *stifled my complaint*, and *compromised a penal statute* by an apology to themselves, to prevent me from bringing forward my charge, and that

* I have already proved that Mr. Martin was not a surgeon to the institution in 1838, when the correspondence was published.

† The agreement has never been out of my possession.

the only regret they felt was that Mr. Martin's assault and scandalous expressions *occurred at the institution*, I requested the committee to meet me on March 8. Only *part of them* having assembled on that day, they refused to allow me to bring forward my complaint *in the absence of Dr. Rowley*,* although *Mr. Martin was present*; and at the adjourned meeting on March 12, as soon as the resolutions of March 4 were read, Mr. WHITMORE, who presided, observing that they only related to *private affairs*, recommended a reconciliation, to which I immediately consented, to prevent the breaking up of the institution; and an amendment to a resolution was carried by a majority, *that all the resolutions of Nov. 4 should be rescinded*. Two of the clergy in the minority protesting against this pacific termination, afterwards succeeded in carrying the following inconsistent resolutions:—One stating that no report should be sent to the trustees, and the other permitting Mr. Martin to insult me by reporting the resolutions, after they had been rescinded—which conveyed an insinuation that *I, and not he*, had been the aggressor; although *the committee were compelled to admit that Mr. Martin was not a surgeon to the institution in 1838, according to the rules*, and that the 43d rule had no reference to me as “surgeon for life.”

At an adjourned meeting of the committee held on Tuesday, the 12th of March, Thomas Whitmore, Esq., in the chair, it was resolved:—

“1st.—Though the committee feel perfectly justified in passing the resolutions of the 4th of March, yet in consequence of the surgeons of the institution, by the recommendation of the president, having expressed their willingness to be reconciled, the committee do not consider it expedient to frame any report on them to the trustees.

“2nd.—That Mr. Martin be permitted to extract the minutes of the 4th of March, and the resolutions of this day, just passed, and to forward them to the distant trustees.

“THOMAS WHITMORE, Chairman.”

Instead of complying with the instructions of the committee to confine the circulation of the resolutions to the eight distant

* This was the only meeting at which Dr. Rowley was absent during all these proceedings.

trustees, *Mr. Martin violated his pledge* by publishing the proceedings *with a comment* ; by distributing them to *many besides the distant trustees* ; and by exhibiting them at his lodgings. This offensive manner in which Mr. Martin abused a privilege, that *no gentleman would have expected him to exercise after reconciliation*, and of which he was advised not to take advantage, compelled me to publish a circular, dated March 22, in explanation of the correspondence and the other private affairs alluded to in the resolutions, and in confirmation of my statements respecting his misconduct at the Infirmary, the enormity of which had been so studiously obscured by the committee. So much indeed was the *Rev. W. K. Marshall* opposed to the publication of two of the resolutions of March 4, that he forbade the exposure of his name, and Mr. Martin *misrepresented in his printed extracts that Dr. Rowley was in the chair, when he was actually absent*. For a copy of my circular, containing my correspondence with the society, see the report of the committee, page 17.

No sooner had this circular made its appearance than the committee, having no right to meddle in the matter, and ever ready to revive hostilities and to bring *private affairs and quarrels* into the institution, agreed to have another meeting, and sent me the following requisition :—

“ Sir,—

“ You are requested to call a meeting of the committee of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, on Friday next, at half-past twelve o'clock, for the purpose of taking into consideration a printed circular of the senior surgeon's, containing some remarks on the resolutions of the committee of the 4th of March, and to transact other business.

“ THOMAS ROWLEY,
G. BELLET,
J. PURTON.

“ Bridgnorth,

“ April 1, 1839.

To this, being secretary and a party concerned, I thought proper to add the following after the words “ 4th of March ” :—

“ Published in consequence of Mr. Martin, after a reconciliation had taken place in the presence of MR. WHITMORE, having circulated those resolutions to *many others* besides the *distant trustees* ; having misrepresented that two of them were passed while Dr. Rowley was in the chair ; and having taking the liberty of for-

warding the said resolutions, *with a comment of his own, in contradiction to his instructions* and to the first resolution of Mar. 12."

At this meeting, held on April 5, Dr. Rowley in the chair, instead of censuring Mr. Martin for abusing his privilege, the committee passed the annexed resolutions:—

"1st.—It is the unanimous opinion of the committee that Mr. Coley, in a circular published March 22, 1839, has directly impeached the truth of the resolutions passed by the committee on the 4th of March last.

"2nd.—That Mr. Coley, having impeached the truth of the committee, has thereby again rendered himself liable to the penalty provided by rule 43; and that a report of the same be laid before the trustees."

While the committee were thus seeking some accusation against me, Mr. Martin, on *Sunday*, April 7, by means of some acid revived part of a correspondence, which had been obliterated in the committee-book. This correspondence which occurred before he came to the town, and which related to a donation, having been satisfactorily concluded, Mr. Martin could have had no other object for restoring it than to discover some excuse for making further mischief; and as the book was constantly exposed to his experiments, I decided the next day to resign my office of hon. secretary, finding it unsafe for any honorable man to hold the office, while the committee sanctioned such dishonorable proceedings.

To the meeting of April 5, the individual who assisted the party on the 4th of March, was again invited, it is said by one of the clergy. A conspiracy was now formed to provoke me to resign my office of "surgeon for life," which having been *privately disclosed to me*, I expressed my determination to maintain my right. My intention being made known, the party again assembled on April 9, when it was resolved, Dr. Rowley in the chair,

"That a report, grounded on the 1st and 2nd resolutions of April 5, be printed and forwarded to the trustees, and that an abstract of it be inserted in the minutes of this book."

At this meeting a report was *written, read, and signed by Dr. Rowley*, in my presence; but *no report nor abstract of it has ever been entered in the committee-book*. It was put into the possession of the Rev. J. Purton, that it may be *literally* copied for the press.

When it was published I found it was *not a literal* copy, and therefore applied to the treasurer for the original, who sent me the subjoined answer :—

“ Mr. Purton presents his compliments to Mr. Coley, and begs to inform him that he does not feel justified in parting with the original manuscript of the report, without some authority from the committee,* it having been intrusted to his keeping by them for a particular purpose. At the same time he has not the slightest objection to Mr. Coley’s seeing it, and comparing it with the printed report.

“ Oldbury, April 20, 1839.”

As Mr. Purton resides in the country, I sent the annexed requisition to Dr. Rowley, from whom I received the following reply on April 20 :—

“ Bridgnorth, April 20, 1839.

“ Sir,

“ We, whose names are subscribed, request you will forward to Mr. J. M. Coley the *original* manuscript report of the committee of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, which was written, read, and signed by the Rev. Dr. Rowley at the Infirmary, on April 9 last ; Mr. Coley engaging to return the same to you, if required, this evening or Monday next.

“ To the Rev. J. Purton.”

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your note arrived just as I was upon the point of sitting down to dinner with some friends, with whom I have till now been engaged on particular business.

“ I have not signed the requisition to Mr. Purton, simply, because I am quite at a loss to understand why I should do so. No doubt he would allow you to compare the printed circular with the original, if you applied to him.

“ Believe me, dear Sir, (in haste,)

“ Your’s sincerely,

“ THOMAS ROWLEY.

“ Saturday.

“ To J. M. Coley, Esq.”

To this I returned the following reply :—

“ April 20, 1839.

“ Dear Sir,

“ Before I wrote to you respecting the *original* report, written, read, and signed by you at the Infirmary, I had applied to Mr.

* Mr. Purton knew I am one of the principal trustees and a member of the committee, and therefore had a right to demand it.

Purton for it, who declined giving it up without some authority from the committee, stating it was entrusted to him for a *particular purpose*. As you agreed with me that no alteration ought to have been made in a single word, I cannot conceive any purpose he could have had for it, except that of taking a literal copy for the printer; nor can I understand that he has any right to keep it at Oldbury, when it ought to be placed under the care of Mr. Winchester, at the Infirmary, for the inspection of any trustee. Mr. Purton said, I might see it; but I could not be expected to go to Oldbury for that purpose.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your's truly,

"J. M. COLEY.

"To the Rev. Dr. Rowley."

On May 4, I again wrote as follows to Mr. Purton:—

"May 4, 1839.

"Mr. J. M. Coley requests Mr. Purton will deposit, under the care of the house apothecary at the Infirmary, for the inspection of the trustees, the original report, which was written, read, and signed by Dr. Rowley at the committee-meeting on April 9; and Mr. Coley wishes to be informed by what authority the manuscript was removed from the institution, as it was understood at the meeting, that all Mr. Purton was permitted to do was to send to the printer a *literal copy of it*, including all the resolutions of the 4th and 12th of March.

"To the Rev. J. Purton."

On May 18, I received the following *Laconic* reply:—

"Mr. Purton having been from home, did not receive Mr. Coley's note of the 4th inst., until yesterday. Mr. Purton now begs to acknowledge the receipt of it.

"Oldbury, May 18, 1839."

The original report, written, read, and signed in my presence by Dr. Rowley, *never* was forwarded.

The following is a copy of the *printed*

REPORT.

"The committee of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, considering that Mr. Coley, the senior surgeon, has rendered himself liable to the penalty provided by the 43rd rule, beg to lay before you, as a trustee of the institution, the grounds on which they have come to that conclusion.

"On the 7th of December, 1838, the following letters appeared in the Ten Towns' Gazette:—

" TO THE EDITOR OF THE TEN TOWNS' MESSENGER.

" Bridgnorth, Nov. 30, 1838.

" Dear Sir,—

" I shall feel obliged if you will do me the favor to give insertion, in your next paper, to the enclosed correspondence between myself and the Society of Apothecaries; my object, as you will perceive, being a desire to protect the interests of regularly educated medical practitioners.

" I am, dear Sir,

" Your's truly,

" J. M. COLEY."

" TO THE WORSHIPFUL THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES, LONDON.

" Bridgnorth, Nov. 20, 1838.

" Gentlemen,

" I will thank you to inform me whether the Society of Apothecaries, in London, have made any arrangement with the College of Surgeons, in Edinburgh, which, in defiance of the Apothecaries' Act, entitles the members of the said college to practice, as apothecaries in England and Wales, without a license from the London Apothecaries' Company. Such a representation has been made by interested parties, with a view of deterring apothecaries from informing against Scotch surgeons, and prohibiting the latter from practising as apothecaries in England, without a license. As no exemption of this kind is to be found in the act of 1815, it appears unjust towards licentiates of the London Apothecaries' Company, that Edinburgh surgeons should be permitted to violate the act; and I shall feel obliged if you will have the goodness to inform me whether you have discontinued to enforce the penalties incurred by Edinburgh surgeons, as many such (*some of whom, to my knowledge, are incapable of translating an English prescription into Latin,*) are at this time illegally practising in England, as apothecaries, to the injury and disadvantage of licentiates of your own society.

" I shall esteem it a favor, if you will transmit me such a reply, as you may have no objection for me to publish in the provincial or other newspapers, &c., *with the view of correcting the error alluded to*, and supporting the interests of a large body of licentiates of your company, against an illegal encroachment on the part of members of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons.

" I have the honor to remain,

" Gentlemen,

" Your obedient servant,

" J. M. COLEY."

"TO J. M. COLEY, ESQ., SURGEON, BRIDGNORTH.

"Apothecaries' Hall, Nov. 22, 1838.

"Sir,

"In reply to your letter of the 20th instant, I beg to inform you that this society *has not made any arrangement with the College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, which entitles the members of that college to practice as apothecaries in England*; and it must be obvious to you that such an arrangement between the two bodies would be opposed to the provisions of the Act of Parliament, for the better regulating the practice of apothecaries in England and Wales.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"R. B. UPTON,

"Clerk to the Society."

At the annual meeting of the subscribers, January 3, 1839, Mr. Coley admitted that the letter, addressed to the Society of Apothecaries, had special reference to Mr. Martin, one of the surgeons of the institution. In consequence of which the following resolution was passed at a meeting of the committee, on the 4th of March :—

"That it is the opinion of the committee, that Mr. Coley having acknowledged that certain letters published by him in the Ten Towns' Messenger, of the 7th of December last, had special reference to Mr. Martin, one of the surgeons to the institution, Mr. Coley has thereby rendered himself liable to the penalty provided by the 43d rule."

At an adjourned Meeting, 12th March, held for the purpose of making a report of the above proceedings to the trustees, the President, Thomas Whitmore, Esq., expressed a desire that the parties would consent to a cordial reconciliation, which suggestion being acted upon by the parties, the following resolutions were passed by the committee :—

"1st.—Though the committee feel perfectly justified in passing the resolutions of the 4th of March, yet in consequence of the surgeons of the institution, by the recommendation of the president, having expressed their willingness to be reconciled, the committee do not consider it expedient to frame any report on them to the trustees."

"2nd.—That Mr. Martin be permitted to extract the minutes of the 4th of March, and the resolutions of this day, just passed, and to forward them to the distant trustees."

Acting upon this permission, Mr. Martin had a few copies* of the resolutions of the 4th of March printed, and forwarded to some of the trustees, to which the following words with Mr. Martin's signature, were appended :—

"I take the liberty of forwarding to you the above resolutions, in answer to Mr. Coley's address and statements."

The day following the reconciliation, Mr. Coley passed Mr. Martin in the street without noticing Mr. Martin's salutation. On the 22d of March, Mr. Coley printed and published the following circular :—

"Mr. Martin having taken the liberty of publishing what he calls an *answer* to Mr. Coley's address and statements, respecting an assault, &c., committed by Mr. Martin on February 1st, Mr. Coley begs it may be distinctly understood that the charge against Mr. Martin has been fully proved, and that what he, Mr. Martin, declared to have been a sufficient provocation for so disgraceful an outrage, was the simple circumstance of Mr. Coley having specially endorsed a draught, to ensure a payment due to Mr. Martin's sister, who keeps a school, in the following words :—"Pay to Miss Mary Martin, Solihull, Warwickshire, School-mistress, or Order."

"Mr. Coley never acknowledged that certain letters, published in the Ten Towns' Messenger, in December last, had *special* reference to Mr. Martin. The letters, which are subjoined, were published, as is stated, for the benefit of the profession, and were intended for the notice of all persons practising in England without a license from the Society of Apothecaries. Mr. Martin has, however, thought proper to apply them *specially* to himself; and, by his own queries and remarks, has published his own disqualification.

"With respect to the agreement, for a co-partnership lately subsisting between Mr. Coley and Mr. Martin, which he states was seen on the 4th of March, Mr. Coley begs to say it was impossible it could have been seen, as it has never been out of Mr. Coley's possession, and *Mr. Coley was not present at any meeting on that day, to reply to any assertions Mr. Martin might have made*; and Mr. Coley, having dissolved all connection with Mr. Martin, some months ago, is at a loss to understand his object for bringing them, or any other private affairs, before the public."

In consequence of the above circular, the committee was again called together on April 5, when the following resolutions were passed :—

* Mr. Martin acknowledged at the meeting that he had *thirty copies*.

"1st.—*It is the unanimous opinion of the committee, that Mr. Coley in a circular published March 22, 1839, has directly impeached the truth of the resolutions passed by the committee on the 4th of March last.*

"2nd.—*That Mr. Coley having impeached the truth of the committee, has thereby again rendered himself liable to the penalty provided by the 43d rule, and that a report of the same be laid before the trustees."*

"The committee conceiving that Mr. Coley, in the letter published in the Ten Towns' Messenger, has attacked the professional character of Mr. Martin; that he has also violated his pledge given to the committee of reconciliation with Mr. Martin, and that he has moreover, in his circular, publicly impugned the truth of the committee, feel it their duty to lay the above statement before the trustees, in conformity with the 43d rule; and earnestly request them to give the matter their most serious consideration, as being one which materially affects the prosperity of the institution.

"THOMAS ROWLEY, Chairman.

"PRESENT :—

"REV. W. K. MARSHALL,	REV. WILLIAM MOORE,
REV. G. BELLET,	MR. J. PHILLIPS,
REV. J. PURTON,	REV. C. F. BROADBENT.
MR. JOHN LEWIS,	

"Bridgnorth Infirmary, April 9, 1839."

It is almost incredible that six clergymen could any where be found so void of better occupation, so oblivious of their sacred office, so fond of strife, and so regardless of the "prosperity" of a medical charity, as to search out the ridiculous materials, which they have laboured to collect to excite a prejudice against the founder and principal benefactor of the institution.

This report is *not grounded on the resolutions of April 5*, but contains a revival of all the proceedings against me, which had been amicably disposed of, anterior to that date; and special care is taken to keep out of view Mr. Martin's assault and scandal, which rendered him liable to expulsion, and was the only matter that concerned the institution. After the original report was read, the party admitted at the meeting that my appointment could not be affected by the 43d rule, and that the word "either" could only apply to one of the two annual surgeons, the Rev. G. Bellet re-

marking that it was derived from a Latin word, signifying *one of two, and unfortunately not applicable to the surgeon for life.*

As soon as this unjust, inconsistent, partial, and uncalled for report was sent forth, *some of the principal trustees and subscribers*, amongst whom may be mentioned the Earl of Stamford, withdrew their support. The party however pledged to "work it out," as they said, after waiting in vain for the aid of the trustees, who were silent, at length succeeded in getting up a meeting on the 22d of June, when they had the mortification of finding that the *only trustee capable of acting*, was Mr. Pritchard, who had convened the meeting with the intention of restoring peace. Mr. Pritchard, whom they have since disinherited and disqualified to act as trustee, told the party candidly that "*the committee had nothing to do with one surgeon passing another in the street,*" and "*that they had no business to trouble themselves about Latin.*" The party therefore, being unsupported, affected to feel *too much delicacy** to "work out" their intention at this meeting; and here the affair might have ended, had the party for a moment consulted "the prosperity of the institution." They, however, after reproaching the nobility and gentry for discountenancing them by their absence, and hesitating whether they should leave the institution in my hands, or attempt again to drive me from it, agreed to make another *earnest* appeal to the trustees, urging them to attend on August 1. This second appeal had little better effect than the first, as to the credit of the nobility and gentry, *only two, capable of acting*, viz. Mr. Pritchard and Mr. T. C. Whitmore, were present; the rest of the party being disqualified by having acted on the committee as *accusers, witnesses, and judges*, and three of them not being trustees to the institution, not having paid the necessary donations. According to rule 20, *three* trustees, capable of acting should have been present, and according to rule 43, which the party had been so anxious to "work out," the meeting should have been a "SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING," *which it was not.*

* Where was their delicacy, when they read a copy of a private partnership-agreement in that board-room?

The meeting therefore having been *illegal*, all the proceedings were *null and void*. The meeting did not hear evidence, nor take "a review of the case," and so precipitate were they, that they passed their resolutions ready prepared, having adopted them from the committee, before they thought of any review of the case; and when I reminded them of their omission, one of the party said *he had reviewed the case at home*: thus admitting that he, like the rest, came with his mind *inflamed and prejudiced*. When I reminded them that the report was not a *literal* copy of that which had been written, read, and signed by Dr. Rowley, at a meeting on April 9, they said that a *sub-committee* had been appointed to prepare it. On referring to the committee-book, *no appointment of a sub-committee was any where to be found!!* As I am a member of the committee and a trustee, ought a sub-committee to be appointed in secret, and what preparation could a report require after it was *passed and signed*?

No charges were, or could be, preferred against me; and all the proceedings were conducted out of mere compliment to the committee, who like the Pope, consider themselves *infallible*; and, like the Medes and Persians, their resolutions *unalterable*. Although *no review of the case was taken, no evidence heard, no charges, affecting any rule of the institution, were or could be brought against me, and they well knew, and did not attempt to deny, that my appointment is for life, and cannot be revoked*, they proceeded in the most wanton manner to pass the following resolutions, while I was protesting against the injustice and illegality of their proceedings.

"At an adjourned meeting of the trustees of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, held on Thursday, the 1st day of August, 1839, for the purpose of considering the report of the committee, calling the attention of the trustees to the conduct of Mr. Coley, the senior surgeon of the institution, and Mr. Coley's printed circular in reply, it was resolved,

"1st.—That it is the opinion of the trustees, that Mr. Coley, in a circular published on the 22nd day of March, 1839, has directly impeached the truth of the resolutions, passed by the committee, on the 4th day of March last.

"2nd.—That Mr. Coley having impeached the truth of the committee, has thereby, and also by the conduct referred to in the report, rendered himself liable to the penalty provided by the 43d rule.

"3rd.—That the trustees, upon a careful review of the case, and the report of the committee, find Mr. Coley guilty of the charges preferred against him, and therefore, in accordance with the 43rd rule, they forthwith dismiss him from the office of surgeon to the institution.

"4th.—That the house apothecary be called in, and informed of the dismissal of Mr. Coley, as surgeon to the institution.

"That the above resolutions be printed and forwarded to the subscribers to the institution.

"THOMAS WHITMORE, Esq., Chairman."

"PRESENT :—

"T. C. WHITMORE, Esq.	REV. C. F. BROADBENT,
REV. T. ROWLEY, D.D.,	J. LEWIS,
REV. JOHN PURTON,	REV. W. MOORE,
J. F. WILLIAMS, Esq.,	GEO. PRITCHARD, Esq."

When I was *unconditionally appointed surgeon for life*, the signature of Mr. WHITMORE ALONE, as chairman, was affixed, in compliance with Rule 20 ; whereas, when this *illegal* and dishonorable attempt was made to revoke that appointment, the party, at Mr. Whitmore's suggestion, agreed to sign all their names. Perhaps they supposed that such an appendage united, like the bundle of sticks, might give the appearance of strength to their cause. Was the Printer forbid—afraid—or ashamed to affix *his name* to such a document ?

Even when an office is merely understood, and not *literally expressed*, to be held for life, as that of recorder, head-master of a grammar-school, registrar, &c., it is necessary to adduce some incapacity, or neglect of duty ; otherwise every such appointment would be at the mercy of party-spirit.

With respect to the foregoing resolutions, it has been already shown, that the meeting on the first of August was *illegal* ; that what is represented as the opinion of the trustees was *only the opinion of the prejudiced party present*, who, it has been proved, were not qualified to give any opinion on the subject as trustees or judges, having been both *accusers* and *witnesses* in the case ;

and I had as much right to deny, as they had to defend, the truth of the resolutions of the committee, unless they can disprove the evidence I can adduce respecting Mr. Martin's assault and scandal, and it can be proved that they were more competent than myself to know my *private affairs*. I was as much justified in maintaining a different opinion about medical or my own private affairs, as Galileo was in *impeaching the truth of the Holy Inquisition*, by declaring that the Sun stood still, instead of revolving, *as they had erroneously believed*. When I stated that "*some*" unlicensed medical practitioners "*are, to my knowledge, incapable of translating an English prescription into Latin,*" the committee took up the cap, and by their *special reference made it exactly fit Mr. Martin, and no one else* ; and therefore *they*, and not *I*, have "*attacked Mr. Martin's professional character.*" When Mr. Martin asked me whether the letters applied to him, I said, "*The Latinity would very well, and tell me the plural of iter, a journey.*" I never said he was the *only* unqualified medical practitioner ignorant of the *declension, gender, and plural number of iter* ; but he and the committee have determined he should be. I must, however, differ from them in believing that *iter* has any thing to do with Mr. Martin's professional *character or conduct*. As to Latin orthography I can adduce *abundant* evidence to satisfy DR. KENNEDY, or any *impartial* scholar, that I was *fully* justified in using the expression in question, and *I challenge the committee to disprove it* ; and before they had meddled with Latin prescriptions, they ought, as guardians of a medical charity, to have been aware that the accuracy of the language in which prescriptions are written is a matter of *vital* importance ; and I leave the public to decide whether I, as trustee and senior surgeon, or the party opposed to me, have discharged their duty to the poor.

The second resolution merely implies, that any surgeon presuming to differ in opinion with the committee of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, must of course be dismissed. The "*conduct referred to in the Report,*" being nothing more than "*passing Mr. Martin in the street,*" is too ridiculous to deserve notice.

My office of "*surgeon for life*" is my freehold, and irrevocable ; and, therefore, the attempt to dismiss me *they knew at the time* to be invalid ; and when I told them I should continue to officiate at the Infirmary, one of the party, mortified and annoyed, said, "That would be very bad grace." They then agreed to order the house apothecary to withhold from the poor the medicines prescribed by me, which order being conveyed to him by the president, he immediately gave notice to leave his situation. To prevent disappointment to the patients I lost no time in giving public notice that I would provide the medicines *at my own expense*, which I have continued to do to the present time, except in a few instances, when I have prepared them myself at the institution, to maintain my right. The first day I was expected to attend at the Infirmary several of the clergy were in readiness to transfer my patients to *Mr. Martin*, whose medical education they knew was unfinished. Of the four hundred patients then under my care, many were afflicted with severe and dangerous diseases, requiring the knowledge of experience, and which might have proved fatal had they been subjected to a different mode of treatment. This attempt was a failure, as forty-nine of the patients who attended on that day left the Institution and proceeded to my house. The next week a more desperate effort was made to coerce the poor : the *Rev. Mr. Moore* and *Mr. J. Lewis* being in attendance at the entrance of the Institution, stopping the patients as they approached, and haranguing and telling them in my presence that they could not have my advice, and must have *Mr. Martin's*. All, however, was in vain, as I operated and prescribed at the Infirmary—regardless of the deluded parties—relieving on that day at the Institution, and at my own house, no less than fifty-four ! *Mr. Martin* also tried to intimidate the poor by telling them that "they would get into trouble if they went to the Infirmary to see me," and that "the trustees would go and turn them out ;" although he well knew I am one of the principal trustees myself.

On the 14th of August the *house apothecary*, who had discharged his duties with the utmost regularity, skill, and attention,

found it necessary to inform the committee that he could not act any longer with Mr. Martin, in consequence of the latter having propagated a scandalous report respecting him, which was traced to Mr. Martin. While the investigation was going on, the house apothecary was *hastily summoned*, on the 16th of August, to a distance of 350 miles to visit his parent, *who died* before he reached home. Although *he had left an approved substitute*, the party assembled at the Infirmary on the 21st of August as *trustees*, and, illegally resolving themselves into a *committee*, declared his office vacant, and appointed Mr. Martin his successor, in defiance of the rules and the Apothecaries' Act.

"At a meeting of the committee held on Wednesday, August 21, 1839, Thomas Whitmore, Esq. in the chair, it was resolved,

"That in consequence of Mr. Winchester the house apothecary having stated to the committee that he could not act with Mr. Martin, one of the surgeons of the Institution, and having absented himself from the Infirmary without the knowledge and consent of the surgeons,* the office of apothecary be declared vacant.

"That the above resolution be communicated immediately to Mr. Winchester.

"That the necessary steps be taken for the appointment of a house apothecary.

"That Mr. Martin having been so kind as to offer to act as house apothecary in the interim, his services be gratefully accepted.

"THOMAS WHITMORE, Chairman."

This was the grand climax of Mr. Martin's operations. In a short time, however, he had the mortification of receiving a "Letter of Caution" from the Society of Apothecaries, which, acting like magic, dismissed him from the town, and was *conclusive evidence of his deception in representing himself to be authorised by them to practice, when he was not*. During Mr. Martin's absence the regular house apothecary returned to complete his engagement till the expiration of his notice. At a meeting of the same party on the 21st of September, an attempt was made to expel him *by*

* My pupil, Mr. Brown, who had discharged the duties of the office before, had my consent and that of Mr. Phillips; and as we were the majority of the surgeons, there was neither time nor necessity to send to Mr. Martin.



force. The subsequent payment of his salary *in advance* was, however, a convincing proof of his right to resume his situation.

Defeated in their scheme to dispossess me of my office of surgeon, the party next endeavoured to deprive me of my right of *trustee*. The medicine, board and surgeons' rooms were locked against me by Mr. Martin. These I ordered to be forced open. Several attempts were also made to obtain my *private pharmacopœia* and *case-books*; the committee finding, when too late, that they could not make a pharmacopœia nor prescribe for the patients. Among other vulgar expedients the following notice was served by Mr. Titterton, who appeared quite astonished when I produced the rules :—

“ TO JAMES MILMAN COLEY, ESQ.

“ We, the undersigned trustees of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, assembled at a special meeting held at the board-room of the said Infirmary, on Friday the 6th day of September, 1839, understanding that you have illegally broken open the door of, and entered the said board-room, and have taken from the said board-room a key, and also some books; and also the keys from the medicine-room and surgery, the property of the said trustees, do hereby demand from you the said keys and books. And we do give you notice, that unless the said keys and books are delivered at or before ten o'clock in the morning of Saturday the 7th day of September instant, proceedings will be taken against you for the illegal acts committed by you. Given under our hands this sixth day of September, 1839.

“ THOMAS WHITMORE, Chairman,
JOHN LEWIS,
THOMAS ROWLEY,
WILLIAM MOORE,
C. F. BROADBENT,
WILLIAM KNOX MARSHALL.

“ Witness, JOHN TITTERTON.”

It is needless to observe, that I treated this illegal notice with the contempt it merited.

In further proof of the unlawful extent to which the party proceeded, the following Letter is adduced in reply to a communication from DR. ROWLEY :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ Before the door of the board-room was forced open, I did inquire for the key from the matron, who informed me that she believed Mr. Martin had locked the door and taken away the key. He had previously locked the surgeons’ room against me, while I was in the Infirmary, and galloped away on horseback with the key. The authority with which I acted was that of trustee, to obviate a recurrence of these trespasses, well knowing that any complaint against Mr. Martin would be of no avail, as he has been supported by a party evidently to annoy me. Any trustee had a right to secure the keys under these circumstances, but not to lock the doors. The majority of the trustees have no right to lock any door against a single trustee. Were the principle you advocate to be admitted, the majority may lock up room after room, till they may exclude an individual trustee altogether from the Infirmary. The right of a trustee is, however, inalienable, and every one has an equal right. Before you had ventured to say I had taken any key from the board-room, you should have ascertained the fact. The key of the cupboards, to which you allude in your letter of to-day, was kept by Mr. Winchester, whom I expect in a few days at Bridgnorth, and I have no doubt he will restore it.

“ Had any information been required in a gentlemanly way, instead of that adopted on Friday, I should soon have satisfied the parties ; but as long as they pursue the course they have adopted of insulting, and endeavouring to drive me from the Institution I had formed, they will plunge themselves into increasing difficulties and troubles, and ultimately ruin the charity.

“ On examining Rules 29, 42, 53, 58, 62 and 70, you will find the surgeons’ books and instruments are their own, and it was not likely, after the illegal and vindictive proceedings adopted towards me, that I should allow a transfer of my property. Were the town council so dishonorable and lawless as to dismiss you from the grammar-school, *because you had raised it into repute*, like a party attempted to dispossess me of my office of surgeon for life, I cannot suppose you would leave your books for the use of an intruder. The books you mention were kept solely for the surgeons individually, and not for the trustees, who may as well have laid claim to the instruments with which I operate. The order given to Mr. Winchester to withhold the medicines from the poor, which are now supplied at my own expense and at my own house, required me to have my case-books in my own possession.

“ With respect to my having, as you say, acted vexatiously, you must recollect that I have, in the late proceedings, been compelled to defend my character, rights, and privileges, which have

been invaded for an express purpose, disclosed to me after the first meeting ; and were it not for my friendship towards you, I should, as I have been legally advised, long ago have filed a criminal information against some of the parties for a conspiracy.

“ As to any prejudice, which you say has been excited against me, a full statement of the facts, which will shortly appear before the public, will afford them an opportunity of forming an impartial opinion ; and, if I am not mistaken by the communications I receive from all quarters, they will unite in expressing their surprise and indignation at the persecution I have received, and the injustice inflicted on the poor objects for whose benefit the charity was established. As to yourself, I have never acted or spoken offensively, and the silence and absence of the majority of the trustees in June and on the 1st of August, are sufficient proofs of their sentiments : and more decided symptoms of dissatisfaction will be shown in the course of a few months. I am willing to give you credit for your expressions of friendship, but cannot conceal from you that Mr. Martin regularly disclosed the plans agreed upon by the parties, long before each meeting took place, and did not attempt to keep secret that the great object had in view from February last, was to insult me so that I should be forced to resign, or be *got rid of* in some other way, if possible. Has the welfare of the Infirmary been promoted by these proceedings ? Every one must answer quite the contrary. The least reflection, setting aside respect or friendship for the founder, might have convinced any one that it would have been better to have left Mr. Martin to settle his private quarrels, or have censured him for bringing them into the institution. I thank you for your expressions of friendship, but you cannot expect me to submit to the injury and injustice I have received, nor to relinquish my rights and privileges, the possession of which will ever be the most convincing proof of my own integrity.

“ I am, dear sir,

“ Your's truly,

“ J. M. COLEY.

“ To the Rev. Dr. Rowley.”

The key of the cupboard in the board-room alluded to, was all the time in the possession of the matron, according to the rules.

I am at a loss to understand how Dr. Rowley could so far have changed his sentiments and lessened his occupation, as to be willing and able to find time to attend meeting after meeting with rigid punctuality at the importunity of a stranger, with whom I thought proper to dissolve all connexion, and to join a party against me, who have possessed Dr. Rowley's confidence as a medical

attendant on his family and school, nearly 20 years. While I was forming the institution, and was soliciting his aid, I received from him the following note :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ When I allowed my name to be put on the committee, it was as you may recollect, stipulated that *I should not be called upon to give my time as well as my name.* I find myself utterly unable to give my personal attention as a member of the committee, and can therefore only wish you every success in the town and elsewhere.

“ Your’s very truly,

“ THOMAS ROWLEY.

“ March 18, 1835.

“ To J. M. Coley, Esq.”

And after saying in 1835, that he “ never heard one individual at parties, at which he was present, speak decidedly in favour of the institution,” and after representing the most discouraging obstacles, and admitting that if I could establish an Infirmary he “ shall be the *first* to acknowledge that the *greatest merit which is due to true benevolence, and steady perseverance, is due to me ;*” and after stating he must “ *decline acting as trustee,*” to help me to complete the good work, it must excite astonishment now to find him not only acting as *committee-man* and *trustee*, but assisting to strike the most *fatal blow* on the charity, for which and its founder he had expressed so much solicitude.

Being perfectly satisfied that the party could not prevent me from practising at the Infirmary by their proceedings on August 1, I admitted William Kirkham, of Madeley, as an in-patient, on whom I operated on the 6th of October, successfully on both eyes for cataract. After the operation, I desired the matron to keep the ward quiet, so that he may not be disturbed. In less than two hours, the following order was sent to the matron :—

“ Bridgnorth, October 6, 1839.

“ We, the undersigned trustees of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, do hereby order and direct the matron, Mrs. Griffiths, to give up to Mr. Joseph Skelding the key of a ward, wherein a patient is at present lying.

“ THOMAS ROWLEY,
WM. MOORE.”

The patient, who before this occurrence was easy and tranquil, was so disturbed and agitated by this boy, as to require bleeding and other active remedies. The next day Mr. Martin made his appearance, and immediately resumed his licentious conduct at the Infirmary, by taking the key of the ward and my written directions from the matron, and ordering her to *withhold all food from the patient*, and to *take the clothes from his bed, and turn him out of the Infirmary*, threatening that, if she did not execute his order, he would do it himself. Mr. Martin carried his want of feeling so far, as to make the patient shed tears. These disgraceful proceedings, which ought to have been followed by Mr. Martin's immediate expulsion, were countenanced by the party, two of whom, the Rev. W. Moore and Mr. J. Lewis, went on Oct. 8 to the Infirmary, to desire the matron not to make any beds nor to give any food to my in-patients, and on Oct. 12, repeated their visit to direct the matron to obey Mr. Martin's orders in everything. Had it not been for my firmness and the humanity of the matron, the poor man in less than a week, after one of the capital operations in surgery, would have been literally famished, and turned out of the institution.

To prevent a recurrence of this barbarous conduct, which I was satisfied nothing but *public exposure* could effect, I published the following letter to the Rev. W. Moore, under whose authority Mr. Martin had acted:—

“ Bridgnorth, Oct. 12, 1839.

“ Sir,

“ Having been informed that you and Mr. Lewis went to the Bridgnorth Infirmary on Tuesday, October 8, to desire the matron not to make up any more beds, nor to supply food to my in-patients, in consequence of hearing that I had successfully operated for *cataract* in both eyes on William Kirkham, who had been *blind five years, and had been discharged incurable* from the *Salop Infirmary*, I have considered it my duty, as *Trustee and Surgeon for life* to the institution, to remind you that, when I founded the charity, it was intended that through it the ‘*benefits of skill and humanity*’ should be extended to every ‘*indigent person*.’ This poor man, for whom I have been so fortunate as to restore the blessing of sight, has a wife and ten children depending on him, and while he was blind and without any means of support,

was of course 'indigent,' and the benefits which he has experienced at my hands, in conformity with the intentions of the trustees, instead of exciting your disapprobation, ought to have filled your mind with satisfaction and delight. Had you a wife and ten children, looking up to you for support, and had you the misfortune to be blind, what would you think of a Minister of the Gospel, who was so devoid of '*humanity*,' as to endeavour to deprive you of the benefits of *skill*, by denying you a bed to lie upon, and food for your support?

"With respect to Mr. Lewis, he is not a trustee of the institution, and consequently not a guardian of the rights of the poor, and therefore I shall not take any notice of him; but you are highly censurable for attempting to *delegate* to Mr. Martin, the privilege you do not yourself possess, of depriving the poor man of his bed, and threatening to turn him out of the institution, and annoying him by disturbing him at all hours in the night, and by the 'most unfeeling conduct in the day.'

"Allow me to tell you that your profession of Christian faith will be of little avail, unless that faith be rendered manifest by *good works*.

"You said that I might have recommended the patient to the *Institution*. So I might, being the largest contributor in the town to its support; but as the Institution 'could not operate,' of what more use would my recommendation have been, than that of the subscriber who recommended him to the Salop Infirmary?

"I intend this letter, and the whole of the late disgraceful proceedings, to be published; and if you and the rest of the committee wish to stand clear in the public estimation, the sooner you check Mr. Martin's licentious conduct at the Infirmary the better.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"J. M. COLEY.

"To the Rev. Mr. Moore,

"Rector of Tasley."

An advertisement afterwards appeared in several provincial newspapers, signed by persons, most of whom had never been within the walls of the Infirmary, and who presumed to assert that my letter contained erroneous statements, which Mr. Moore himself could not contradict, I think it right to record the annexed testimonial of the matron. It is much to the credit of the medical profession that the only members of the 'healing art,' who signed Mr. Moore's advertisement, were his medical attendant and assistant, and a cow-leech.

" DEPOSITION OF MRS. GRIFFITHS.

"I was matron at the Bridgnorth Infirmary, while William Kirkham was an in-patient. After Mr. Coley had operated on him on Sunday, Oct. 6, he desired me to keep the ward locked to prevent any one disturbing the patient. Master Skelding went to the Infirmary soon afterwards, and wanted to go into the ward. I refused him admittance, and told him Mr. Coley's order. In less than two hours after the operation he brought me a note signed by the Rev. Dr. Rowley and the Rev. W. Moore, to desire me to give him the key. I then opened the door and allowed him to go in. After he went away I locked the ward, and the next morning he came again with Mr. Martin, who forced me to give him (Mr. Martin) the key, and Mr. Coley's written order. Mr. Martin told me I must not give the patient any food, and on Tuesday, Oct. 8, the Rev. W. Moore and Mr. Lewis went to the Infirmary, and desired me not to give any food, nor to make any beds for Mr. Coley's patients. Mr. Martin told me afterwards that I must not give Kirkham any food, and that I must take the clothes off his bed and lock them up, and turn him out, and if I did not do so, he would himself. Mr. Moore and Mr. Lewis came again on Saturday, Oct. 12, when Mr. Moore told me I must obey Mr. Martin's orders, as much as if he was a trustee. The next day, while Kirkham was taking his breakfast, Mr. Martin asked me whether I gave it him. I said I did, and that I could not see the poor man starve, and that his food was supplied by Mr. Coley. Mr. Martin then said he would report me to the committee, which he did; and when they met the following Wednesday, they all began to be very angry with me for giving Kirkham any food, upon which I immediately gave them notice to leave my situation. All the in-patients are supported at their own expense, or that of the subscribers recommending them; and Mr. Coley paid me the weekly allowance for Kirkham, and sent him most of his food.

" Signed Mary Griffiths, her mark ✕

"The above was read and signed in the presence of William Macmichael,

" Mayor of Bridgnorth,

" Nov. 27, 1839."

According to the principles upon which the Infirmary is founded, it is open to any person in need of medical and surgical relief, and all in-patients have the privilege of placing themselves under the care of the surgeon whom they may prefer. Mr. Moore had, therefore, no right to forbid the matron administering food, as it is never provided at the expense of the Institution, but of the patient or subscriber.



Mr. Winchester having, with my permission, been present at the operation on W. Kirkham, the committee met on the 16th of October, *two days after he, Mr. Winchester, had left the town*, and, on Mr. Martin's complaint passed the following resolutions :—

“ At a meeting of the committee held on the 16th of October, 1839, the Rev. John Purton in the chair, it was resolved,

“ That Mr. Henry Vickers, solicitor, be instructed to furnish due notice to Mr. Winchester, late house-apothecary, that in future if he intrude upon the premises of the Institution, he will be summarily dealt with as a wilful trespasser.

“ That Mrs. Griffiths, matron, having given notice to resign her situation, steps be taken to supply her place.

“ JOHN PURTON, Chairman.”

After the party had taken the most effectual steps to destroy the character and usefulness of the Institution, by ill-using me, as founder and senior surgeon, offending the subscribers, who are consequently withdrawing their subscriptions, and by driving away the patients, they made a proposal to induce the subscribers of the Dispensary to join them, which was prudently declined. The funds of the Dispensary are overflowing about as much as those of the Infirmary are deficient ; and it would have helped the party in their difficulty, if they could have secured the former. A notice was next sent to the trustees and subscribers of a special meeting to be held on the 5th of October, “ for the purpose of *considering the best mode of conducting the Institution in future ;*” and on the 19th of November new Rules were published, having no reference to those which had been made by me, and by which the Institution had been governed with *so much success and satisfaction* since its establishment. As the original Rules *have never been repealed*, the new ones are of course in-operative ; and instead of diminishing their difficulties, these new Regulations have plunged the party who framed them into greater trouble than ever : as the charity will in future be in constant war by the conflict of two codes of Rules.

When I made the original Rules, and solicited the donations for the erection of the Infirmary, all contributions of £25 and upwards were paid with the understanding that, according to Rule 6, “ *the heirs of the original trustees be inheritors of the trust*

for ever." The acting party have, by their new Rules, disinherited the late Sir T. J. T. Jones's heir and Mr. G. Pritchard, who came forward at the meeting on June 22, and August 1, in the capacity of trustee, by virtue of his late father's donation of £25. If Mr. G. Pritchard is not a trustee now, was he a trustee on June 22, and August 1? Such a proceeding cannot excite surprise, when the conduct of the party towards myself, the late house-apothecary, matron, the patients and subscribers, is considered: the last being deprived by the society, as they call themselves, of all power of electing the officers, contrary to the custom existing in every other Institution supported by voluntary contribution. By the new Rules it appears all the *future* affairs of the party are to be conducted in *secrecy*.

It would be a waste of time to point out the numerous inconsistencies and contradictions in the new Rules, which, as they are not authenticated by any signatures, except those of Edkins and Son, printers, at the Albion office, I conclude are only circulated for the inspection and approval of the trustees, as is customary at the Salop and other Infirmarys. I cannot, however, omit expressing my admiration of the following: that "*a sermon be preached before the society.*" According to the original Rules, it was intended that *sermons* should be occasionally preached "*for the benefit of the charity;*" but, as the use of the pulpit has never been granted for that purpose, it is possible that an appropriate discourse preached *before the society* on their conduct in the late proceedings might be very beneficial;* and if any further evidence should be required to prove that they have "*strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel,*" the following correspondence is at their service. They should, however, take care to preface the discourse by a

* Being desirous that a sermon should be preached for the benefit of the charity, on the day when the first stone was laid, I wrote, at the suggestion of Mr. T. C. Whitmore, to the venerable Archdeacon Bather, *with the concurrence of the Rev. W. K. Marshall.* While my correspondence was going on, the Rev. G. Bellet forbid the use of his pulpit, observing that he disapproved of any charity-sermons, except for objects *foreign to the town.* When Mr. Bellet expressed this veto, Mr. Marshall coincided with him, and thus the churches were withheld from the charity.

vocabulary in reference to the 43d Rule, defining what kind of *lying and defamation* constitutes, according to *their creed*, "*immoral and dishonorable conduct*," and what the contrary. According to my plain understanding, they must discover plenty of legitimate work for the 43d Rule.

" Bridgnorth, October 12, 1839.

" Sir,

" Some time ago one of your servants brought a note requesting an 'elastic bottle' for one of your children, dangerously ill with convulsions, and stating, that he had been at Albrighton and Shiffnal, and to all the medical men in this place, and could not obtain the instrument. Although I was not the medical attendant on your child, I lost no time in forwarding an apparatus of my own, and one which I sent for to the Infirmary, where it was of no use; and both of us being trustees to the Institution, I conceived we had a right to it *under such circumstances*. In this affair I was influenced solely by the desire of rendering any assistance in my power; but, to my great astonishment, I find Mr. Martin has published a report that I made you a charge for the instrument. As I did *no such thing*, I request you will inform me whether any one has made you a charge for it in my name, and whether you ever told Mr. Martin that I had made you a charge for anything belonging to the institution.

" I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

" J. M. COLEY.

" To T. C. Whitmore, Esq. M.P., Cotsbrook."

" Cotsbrook, Tuesday, Oct. 15, 1839.

" Sir,

" Your letter of the 12th instant did not reach me till last night, in consequence of my having been from home for a few days, or I should have sent you an immediate answer.

" No one has ever made me a charge in your name, nor did I ever tell Mr. Martin, or any one else, that you have made me a charge for the instrument in question, or for anything else belonging to the Bridgnorth Infirmary: *if I had done so, I should have told a most abominable falsehood*.

" It was not till about two months ago that I discovered, by the merest accident, that I had then in my possession—in my nursery—an 'elastic bottle,' and that it was the property of the Bridgnorth Infirmary. I, of course, immediately returned it to the institution.

" I am, Sir,

" Your most obedient servant,

" T. C. WHITMORE.

" To J. M. Coley, Esq., Bridgnorth."

" TO THE EDITOR OF THE TEN TOWNS' MESSENGER.

" Sir,

" Will you do me the favour of inserting the following contradiction to some *statements*, signed J. M. Coley, which appeared in your paper of Friday last.

" What Mr. Coley asserted there is FALSE. I only condescend to substantiate my assertion by the fact of the letter, signed J. C. Whitmore, being a GARBLED and PARTIAL copy of one which he (Mr. Whitmore) thought necessary to address to this Mr. Coley. Copies of the original documents are in my possession, and open to the inspection of any one who may desire it.

" I am kindly permitted by Mr. T. C. Whitmore to refer to him as to the truth of this letter.

" In conclusion, I beg to say that, after this exposure, I will never again reply to any of the productions of Mr. J. M. Coley.

" I am, Sir,

" Your most obedient servant,

" J. MARTIN.

" Bridgnorth, Oct. 23, 1839."

" TO THE EDITOR OF THE TEN TOWNS' MESSENGER.

" Sir,

" Mr. Martin having, in your paper of this day, had the audacity to attempt to throw discredit on the parts of Mr. T. C. Whitmore's letter, published in your paper of October 18, simply because the whole of the letter was not copied, I request you will insert in your next an *entire copy*, which will confirm the accuracy of my extracts, and *again* expose Mr. Martin's falsehood.

" I considered it needless to adduce in evidence any other parts, except those directly relating to the malicious and unfounded report, which I have the most undeniable authority for stating was invented and propagated by Mr. Martin.

" I am, sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" J. M. COLEY.

" Bridgnorth, Oct. 25, 1839.

" Cotsbrook, Tuesday, Oct. 15, 1839.

" Sir,

" Your letter of the 12th inst. did not reach me till last night, in consequence of my having been from home a few days, or I should have sent an immediate reply.

" You request me to inform you, first, 'whether any one has made me a charge for it (that is an elastic bottle belonging to the Bridgnorth Infirmary) in your name;' and secondly, 'whether I ever told Mr. Martin that you had made me a charge for any thing belonging to the institution.'

"Now, to both of these questions, although you must allow me to say they are not put in the most courteous manner, and I am not aware that I am in any way bound to answer them, I have no difficulty in replying most distinctly in the negative. No one has made me a charge in your name, nor did I ever tell Mr. Martin, or any one else, that you have made me a charge for the instrument in question, or for any thing else belonging to the Bridgnorth Infirmary; *if I had done so, I should have told a most abominable falsehood.*

"With regard to the subject of your letter generally, I must beg to observe that I find, on inquiry, (for I was not at home, but in London at the time,) that when my children were dangerously ill, in the month of May, 1838, Lady Louisa sent over to Bridgnorth for the purpose of procuring an apparatus, such as you describe, and that you were so kind as to send her two. It was not till about two months ago that I discovered, by the merest accident, that I had then in my possession, in my nursery, an elastic bottle, and that it was the property of the Bridgnorth Infirmary. I, of course, immediately sent it to the institution.

"Then as to the other, which it seems was your own, I have now been making enquiries, but it is no where to be found. Whether it was returned or not, my servant cannot recollect; and I do not collect from your letter how the matter stands in this respect. If you have never received it, I have to express my great regret that it should have been retained here for such a length of time, and beg that you will allow me to replace it immediately, if I hear that it is not already in your possession.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"T. C. WHITMORE.

"To J. M. Coley, Esq."

"Bridgnorth, Oct. 15, 1839.

"Sir,

"I am much obliged for your satisfactory reply respecting Mr. Martin's falsehood, and regret you should for a moment suppose I believed you could have told him that I had made any charge for the instrument in question. My only motive for writing to you was to have an opportunity of contradicting the assertion he made not only in the presence of a friend and myself, but to many others.

"I beg you will not give yourself any trouble to find or replace the other apparatus, as it is of no value. Your servant called some time after to inquire what you were in debt, and I told him I had *no charge to make*; and I never should have thought of, or revived the affair to your notice, had not Mr. Martin been so indelicate and dishonorable as to publish the report. His conduct in this business does not astonish me, as he well knew, before I

dissolved all connexion with him, I never would hold any communication with him, except in the presence of a third person.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"J. M. COLEY.

"To T. C. Whitmore, Esq."

With respect to the elastic bottle, Mr. T. C. Whitmore does not say who *told him it belonged to the Infirmary*, and perhaps he is not aware that Mr. Martin has said he rode over to Cotsbrook *to bring it back*.

After this correspondence was published, the party met at the Infirmary, on Oct. 23, and, as usual, instead of recording their "disapprobation" about Mr. Martin's conduct, passed the following resolution to deter me from persisting in maintaining my right :—

"That instructions be given to Mr. Henry Vickers to apply to the Borough Magistrates to summon the said J. M. Coley before them, to answer sundry charges of breaking open the doors of the Infirmary, and wilfully damaging the property of the said trustees.

"PRESENT :—

"THOMAS WHITMORE,	T. C. WHITMORE,
THOMAS ROWLEY,	WILLIAM MOORE,
JOHN LEWIS,	C. F. BROADBENT,
JOHN PURTON,	W. KNOX MARSHALL."

If the party supposed this low expedient would prevent me from exercising my power as trustee, of obtaining admission into any part of the Infirmary, they are mistaken. Mr. Martin has no more right to lock the doors of the Infirmary and take possession of the keys than he has to lock the church doors against Mr. Marshall, the incumbent, or to lock the grammar-school and expect Dr. Rowley to follow him about the town, or after the hounds, before he can obtain admission. That such an attempt was made to render my privilege subservient to Mr. Martin's caprice, the following note will testify :—

"Sir,

"At a meeting of the trustees of the Bridgnorth Infirmary, I was desired to keep the door of the drug-room locked; at the

same time I was directed to grant you admittance whenever you might require it.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your most obedient,

“ J. H. MARTIN.

“ House Surgen, *pro tem*.

“ Bridgnorth Infirmary, Oct. 23, 1839.

“ To J. M. Coley, Surgen.”

As the party did not venture to act upon their resolution, I conclude Mr. Vickers gave them better advice.

It is deserving of notice, that when any illegal resolutions have been recorded, not one of the party takes the responsibility of signing his name alone, as may be seen by referring to the report and the meeting of August 1, &c. It has also been a system to divert every charge against Mr. Martin by insulting the complainants.

Allusion having been made to private quarrels, it is necessary to state, that the first introduction of them took place last year, when Mr. Roycroft, the house-apothecary, thought proper to resent the insult contained in the following testimonial:—

“ That Mr. Williams said Mr. Roycroft had been with the washer woman, to try to make such a bargain with her as would enable him to put into his pocket something out of the allowance made by the committee ‘for his washing.’

“ J. H. MARTIN.

“ Bridgnorth, June 20, 1838.”

Mr. Williams, offended at the manner in which Mr. Roycroft expressed himself respecting this and other grievances applied to the Rev. G. Bellet to extract an apology from Mr. Roycroft, who, conceiving himself the party aggrieved, declined to submit to the terms proposed. Mr. Williams then requested me to assemble the committee. To this request I could not accede, as the rules only applied to Mr. Roycroft's conduct in his official capacity, and not to private disputes about washerwomen, &c. Mr. Williams was, however, determined to have his meeting, which was held on a day *when Mr. Martin knew I had an engagement at Shrewsbury*. The party took the liberty, *in my absence*, of censuring me for endeavouring to keep private quarrels and private affairs

out of the committee-room ; and afterwards sent me another requisition to convene them to hear a second complaint against Mr. Roycroft for refusing to pay the public money to Mr. Williams's servant-boy without a receipt.* Mr. Roycroft feeling that he had no friend in the town except myself, resigned his office ; and thus was the institution deprived of one of the most active, assiduous, intelligent and humane apothecaries that ever officiated at any public charity—beloved by the poor and respected by all the subscribers, except the party ungenerously opposed to him. Had not Mr. T. C. Whitmore been prevented attending these meetings, *when party-spirit first broke out*, it is probable he would have assisted me in putting a stop to such proceedings, as the following extract from a letter, dated June 16, 1838, will testify :—

“ I am sorry that anything unpleasant has occurred of the nature you mention, as we have *opposition enough* to contend with already, without being engaged in the *personal quarrels* of the officers of the institution, and which, I fear, can only tend to lower it in the opinion of the public.”

It will be needless to detail all the abuses existing at the Infirmary. One example will suffice to shew how the subscribers and the poor are insulted. On Monday, Dec. 16, Thomas Burton was recommended to be placed under my care by Messrs. S. and E. Ridley. After I had visited the patient, I sent my prescription to the Infirmary ; the house-apothecary was out and had *locked the door of the medicine-room*. As no time was to be lost, I went to the institution and caused the door to be opened, and prepared the medicine myself. The following Wednesday I sent another prescription, when Mr. Woodward, the apothecary, refused to give the medicine to the messenger, the poor man's wife, whose deposition, signed on the back of the prescription, is here adduced :—

“ Bridgnorth, Dec. 18, 1839.

“ The prescription on the other side was taken by me this

* While the committee were thus occupied in framing insulting resolutions against me, merely because I did not sanction their proceedings, I was engaged in advocating the cause of *our infant institution*, at a county meeting of medical men at Salop, one of whom had the liberality to give me £21, to be disposed of in any way I thought best for the benefit of the charity.

morning to the Infirmary, when Mr. Woodward refused to make the medicine for my husband.

“Signed Mary Burton, her mark ✕.

“Witnesses :—

“M. A. RIDLEY,
J. M. COLEY.”

The same day I sent the following note to Mr. Woodward :—

“Bridgnorth, Dec. 18, 1839.

“Mr. J. M. Coley, trustee, surgeon for life, and subscriber of £3 3s., and Messrs. Ridley, subscribers of £2 2s. to the Bridgnorth Infirmary, having this morning sent to the Infirmary for medicines for Thomas Burton, a patient of the institution, and Mr. Woodward having refused to make the medicines for the patient, Mr. Woodward is desired, before ten o'clock to-morrow morning, to forward to Mr. Coley a copy of any *written order or resolution with that of the signature or signatures thereto*, by which Mr. Woodward can shew his authority for refusing to supply any of the patients with medicines prescribed by Mr. Coley, under whose care, and not that of the annual surgeons, Messrs. Ridley have placed the patient.

“To Mr. Woodward, Bridgnorth Infirmary.”

As this letter was unanswerable, and the apothecary is acting only under *private* orders, no one can wonder that the subscribers should withdraw their subscriptions, and resent the conduct of a few, who meet to “order and direct” a stipendiary officer to turn his face from any poor man, and invoke upon the institution the odium instead of the gratitude of the afflicted. It would be better to shut up the Infirmary, than to abuse it by persecuting three-fourths of the patients, and adding inhumanity to the sufferings of disease and infirmity.

When we review the preceding facts, all of which can be authenticated, the mind of every just and honourable man must be lost in astonishment. After founding, establishing, conducting, and in part furnishing the infirmary, contributing nearly £100 by my own donation, and those of my medical friends, towards the building, and subscribing annually more than any other person in the town, relieving gratuitously nearly all the patients, and performing all the operations, it could not have been supposed possible that any individual, to gratify private malice and vain calculations, could, by misrepresentations and delusions, excite a party to endea-



your to detach me, and consequently 700 objects of charity, from the institution, with which, by my appointment and my whole conduct, I am inseparably united.* My objects in founding the Infirmary were, to provide relief for the poor and to promote medical science; and, had not the local committee, appointed to conduct the *minor* departments, ignorant of their proper duty, attended almost exclusively to Mr. Martin's private affairs, and countenanced and encouraged his licentious conduct, it would have maintained its character and utility. I shall always feel indebted to those noblemen and gentlemen who so firmly resisted all connexion with this local party, and left them to experience the mortification of being the promoters of the present degraded state of the charity. When Mr. Whitmore acted on the *committee*, he considered all the transactions of a *private* nature, and declined entering upon them. Why was he induced to act against his own opinion and better feelings by joining this belligerent party afterwards, in capacity of *trustee*, in opposition to one of his oldest and firmest friends in the borough, and attempting to revoke an appointment, *signed by himself*, which every honorable man must know is irrevocable, and which I had never forfeited by any act or deed? The unfortunate coalition formed at the first meeting, and the discussion of such subjects as a copy of a private partner-

* The effects of detraction and falsehood were lately well illustrated by the Duke of Rutland, at an agricultural meeting at Leicester. Mr. Higgs and Mr. Spencer, educated together at the same school and college, and afterwards officiating as clergymen in the same county, were on the most friendly terms, till a mischievous neighbour, envious of their happiness, adopted the following means of destroying it. He first went to Mr. Higgs, and informed him that Mr. Spencer had been defaming him with the following lines:—

“ I’d rather be the man that digs
Than the Rev. Mr. Higgs.”

Having succeeded in removing Mr. Higgs’ confidence in his friend, he went to Mr. Spencer, whom he said Mr. Higgs had been abusing with the following:—

“ I never knew a man much denser
Than the Rev. Mr. Spencer.”

Special care having been taken to prevent explanation, the first time Mr. Higgs and Mr. Spencer met, they were distant; and in a short time their friendship ceased, never to be restored.

ship agreement, the indorsement of a draft to Miss Mary Martin, &c., were, *in my absence*, most indelicate proceedings. Such is the singular situation in which they have placed themselves by attending to Mr. Martin's daily idle reports of private transactions ; that he can with impunity deface the committee-book with acid—assault, defame, and insult the regular medical officers—violate any rule to suit his purpose—tell the patients that the trustees will turn them out if they seek my advice—lock the doors and gallop off with the keys, while I am in the institution—order the matron to furnish my in-patients, &c.—fetch a police-officer to intimidate *my pupil*, who was sent to the Infirmary by me with a message—order *unnecessary* drugs from the *uncle of the Rev. W. Moore*, and turn off one of the most respectable druggists in the kingdom without my knowledge, who am a member of the committee and senior surgeon—call meeting after meeting to introduce his private quarrels—neglect out-patients labouring under acute and dangerous diseases, whom I am at this moment, Dec. 10, attending at the earnest solicitation of their friends—and, although neither subscriber nor trustee, act as if he were sole proprietor and “master,” as he calls himself, of the establishment ! The conduct of the clergy in authorising and countenancing this conduct, and in persecuting me and my patients, and withholding from poor Kirkham, in particular, their benedictions and aid in returning thanks to Almighty God for the blessing of sight restored to him, is inexplicable ; and when desired to express the offence either my patients or I have committed at the institution, they are at a loss to discover any. Before my out-patients were unjustly deprived of their medicines, the number applying for my advice at the institution averaged from fifty to sixty every week. Since they have been driven to my house I seldom find a patient at the Infirmary, and there has been only one in-patient since the inhuman treatment of Kirkham ; and the office of the house-apothecary of the almost deserted institution is little better than a sinecure.

I should have been glad to have lessened my public duties, as they encroach greatly on my private practice and domestic comfort, when I could have seen the institution I had established in

the hands of practitioners possessing adequate experience and the confidence of the poor objects who look to me daily for relief. The party forgot that, although subscriptions may be liberally bestowed, *medical men* alone give character and stability to a *medical charity*. I can appeal to the subscribers and the poor to declare whether or not they were all satisfied with the extensive benefits disseminated while the institution was conducted by my rules and under my direction.

From the commencement party-spirit was at work, ready to nip the first bud of the institution; and as the latter grew in strength, and defied all opposition, and I was in hopes of securing to the poor a continuance of those blessings it diffused, party-spirit again broke out, and, regardless of law, justice, and humanity, has, in a few months, like a devouring element, nearly tore it up by the root. Being a devoted friend to the Church, which I believe to be built upon an imperishable foundation, and having always been led to understand and feel that charity is the noblest attribute of our nature, and the highest of all the cardinal virtues, it is with deep concern I have beheld some of the ministers of our holy religion giving their support to acts of inhumanity at the Infirmary. Such, however, is the violence of party-spirit and the obstinacy of prejudice, that reason and religion are sometimes shaken by them, like a strong tower by a tempest. If those who at present monopolise the management of the institution continue to regulate their proceedings by party-spirit, and close their eyes to the abuses which now exist, they can have no right to expect a continuance of that support which I have solicited, under an implied engagement that all objects of charity would enjoy the benefits of medical experience at an institution, from which, as from a fountain, they might feel entitled to receive health and vigour. Notwithstanding all the rash and revolutionary proceedings of the party, and the present degraded and almost useless state of the charity, it is my firm intention to maintain, unflinchingly, my right of *trustee*, and my irrevocable office of "*surgeon for life*," to the Bridgnorth Infirmary.

Bridgnorth, December 26, 1839.

JOSEPH BRIDGEN, PRINTER, DARLINGTON STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON.

